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COUNTRY Colombia

SUBJECT Possible Liberal Party Candidates in 1950

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Comment. Several Liberal Party leaders in Colombia have been named as possible presidential candidates in the May 1950 elections. There have been no indications, however, that any one person has sufficient strength to win the support of the entire Party, and there is a strong possibility that there will be another split similar to the one in the 1946 elections.)

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1. Dr. Francisco Jose Chaux has admitted to friends that he believes his chances in the forthcoming elections are waning and that the majority of the Liberal Party will support Dario Echandia, the present Minister of Government. Dr. Carlos Lleras Restrepo, ex-Chairman of the National Liberal Party Directorate, was also mentioned as a possible candidate. (Comment. Echandia has announced his determination to resign from the Government and to retire permanently from politics, but there is no certainty that he will do so. In some circles Lleras Restrepo is believed to have lost influence and support because of his recent economic proposals.)
2. Ex-President Alfonso Lopez Pumarejo has aroused considerable interest by announcing that he will return to active politics. Lopez lost a great deal of prestige after Gaitan accused him in January 1948 of being responsible in a large measure for the Liberal Party defeat in May 1946. As a result of this accusation none of Lopez' partisans has been included in recent Liberal Party directorates. Jesus Antonio Guzman attempted unsuccessfully to secure for Lopez the support of Liberal congressmen after Lopez decided to become active in politics again. Guzman is reported to have stated that Lopez does not intend to run for the presidency himself, but that he will try to secure support for Carlos Sanz de Santamaria, the former Colombian Ambassador to the United States.

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